1: Bowen-Jones et al. K-5 (1955-1958) 1961
EZ6 Malta EZ6

fusion. Like their predecessors, the temple-builders, the Maltese of Period II represent one cul-de-sac ending 'of a gradual and infinitely complex movement of people and cultural elements from the Eastern to the Central Mediterranean' (8). The culture of Period I was probably erased in all forms but the monumental; the second probably persisted until Semitic contact was made with the Islands some time between the eighth and sixth centuries B.C.

Much has been speculated, though remarkably little is known, concerning the Phoenicians in Malta. As evidence one can only offer a few inscriptions found in various parts of the island, and characteristically Punic forms of burial which seem to have persisted down to the Roman occupation. The Phoenicians were once given credit for the great megalithic monuments and, until recently, it was fashionable to give them credit for the Maltese language as well. During the last 40 years, archaeological, linguistic and, to some extent, anthropometric advances in knowledge have changed the picture. Phoenicians and, later, Carthaginians may have come as traders but it is difficult to imagine that the Islands could have been anything more than transit points on shipping routes. Semitic settlers and administrators may have imposed an organised domination over Malta and Gozo: Mdina at least has produced pottery of Period I, Period II, Punic, Roman and later styles and, as already noted, Punic type rock tombs are numerous. Nevertheless, during the period of Greco-Punic rivalry in the Central Mediterranean, there is no certain Greek reference to Malta, whereas accounts such as that of Thucydides (Book VI) give detailed statements of all the important points held by 'the enemy'. Linguistically it may be feasible to consider that the Semitic structure and content of the Maltese language may have pre-Islamic elements but it is neither correct nor necessary to invoke a Punic conquest to account for this. The anthropological work of Buxton and Bradley (9) has but limited general value because of the difficulty of dating the prehistoric human remains (largely cranial). Even so, there is no supporting evidence for a Phoenician and/or Carthaginian colonisation.

All we know for certain is that, during the second century B.C., Rome, triumphant over Carthage, assumed political control in the Maltese Islands. The Islands were made part of the Praetorship of Sicily and, later, first Malta, and then Gozo were given 'Municipium' status. Direct evidence of conditions in Malta even during this, the first historical period, is fragmentary. Strabo mentions Malta and Gozo in terms of position, Livy and Ovid are scarcely more helpful. Cicero is a little more illuminating in his oration against Varres, once Praetor of Sicily, who was accused of abusing his position: '... what could you want with so much Maltese cloth, as if you were going to dress all your friends' wives?' Diodorus Siculus records that 'Melite' possessed many 'harbours', that its artisans were cunning weavers of linen and that the houses were architecturally worthy of note. He also believed that Malta was a Punic-planted colony and was already accruing wealth from sea trade. The Bible tells us nothing beyond the fact that St. Paul was shipwrecked on 'Melita' in A.D. 60 and spent some time thereafter in the island.

Archaeological evidence is scarcely more helpful, limited as it is to a few inscriptions, coins and parts of buildings in pre-existing settlements such as Rabat and Żurrieq. What we do know of the Roman period is, however, of some importance. It seems likely that Malta had long lain on the orbital fringe of a Siculo-Aegean culture zone and had probably been affected by Mycenean and Punic contacts. Henceforth, with one short break, the Islands occupied a place in the political and cultural organisation first of Rome and Byzantium and then of Christendom. For some five centuries, it seems reasonably to assume, the Maltese Islands were an organic part of Roman town-centred civilisation. After the Gothic and Vandal irruptions broke the unity of the Western Mediterranean the Justinian reconquest of Sicily may have included Malta or may merely have improved the regional stability around an isolated outpost of Roman culture in Malta. Again we do not know. During the long decline of Rome and the new territorial adjustments which preceded the rise of Islam, there is no direct evidence but only conjecture on the fate of Malta.

1: Bowen-Jones et al. K-5 (1955-1953) 1961
EZ6 Malta EZ6

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During the latter half of the ninth century A.D., we believe that the Islamic conquest of Sicily extended over Malta and for just over two centuries, the Islands came under non-European rule. This period is yet another element of the Maltese past which today appears fraught with significance but which remains maddeningly obscure. The material evidence of what may be termed the Arab era is limited to parts of the fortifications of Sant Anġlu (Birgu), the Grand Harbour and of Mdina, the *Medina* and capital of the Muslim rulers. The cultural and linguistic evidence is more abundant but its significance is also less certain. The census of households taken in 1240 (see p. 135) listed 771 Muslim as against 250 Christian families but what does this really imply? We can only hazard a guess as to the numerical accuracy of the count and, since we do not know for what purpose it was made, we cannot assess the meaning of 'Muslim family' in this context. In Malta today the townsman, who speaks a language basically Semitic, will often, rightly, insist on his post-Arab, European origin, yet in the country a farmer, speaking a language almost Arabic in content as well as Semitic in structure, may in all humility describe himself as 'Gharab'. We are left with speculation. Was Malta intensively Arabised? There is no evidence of religious persecution during this period and, although this is a dangerous argument, there seems little enough reason for Arab interest in the Islands to have been particularly strong. It may be that the Maltese were already sufficiently Semitic in language and cultural background easily to be overwhelmed by this last incursion from the East. Was the Roman and Christian overlay so thin as to allow something older and alien to Europe to break through? Even today, the horns of fertility appear side by side with Christian symbols. At all events, by 1090 and the Norman conquest of Malta, the Islands had become sufficiently non-European to retain a much stronger impress of the East than did even Sicily.

With the arrival of the Normans in Malta, less than 30 years after their occupation of England, Malta was rescued for Christendom to become one of the outposts and bulwarks of European culture. By the time of Roger II's assumption of the title of King of the Sicilies in 1139, the Christian Cathedral had been built at Mdina and the line of Island Bishops re-established. Until 1266, Malta and Gozo formed part of an Italo-Sicilian political unit, as a fief of the Grand Admiral of Sicily under the Norman crown from 1193 to 1194, and then under Swabian rulers. Presumably some form of feudal social and political organisation made an embryonic appearance but here once more we have practically no evidence. Indeed, although some late records do exist, no real study has yet been made of the social and economic basis of feudal life and land-holding for any pre-nineteenth century period of Maltese history. There is mention of Malta as a *commune* in 1208 (10) and in 1274 the *Consiglio Popolare dell Universitè* is recorded as protesting to Charles of Anjou, the contemporary ruler, over the violation of ancient rights (10).

In 1282, Aragonese rule was accepted by Sicily and in 1283 Malta also passed under Iberian control. The Islands remained associated with Sicily for administrative purposes and would seem to have been farmed out in parts as fiefs to members of the Aragonese and Sicilian nobility. At this time, too, the first noble titles were conferred on the indigenous aristocracy, beginning with that of Baron of Diar il-Bniet in 1350 (11). Otherwise, little is known except that the religious orders were early established and that the Church must at this time have secured its firm place in Maltese life. Arab corsairs continued to attack and plunder and to be attacked in their turn by Sicilian and Maltese ships. The population cannot have been numerous and we must assume that it was concentrated in large villages in the centres of the Islands. At Città Notabile (the old Mdina) (Plate IX), and at Gozitan Rabat (Plate X), the citadels were flanked by the houses of the magnates. There is no record of trade or manufacture.

Thus, until A.D. 1530, Malta existed feudally in relative stagnation, its isolation broken only by the alarms and excursions of sea-borne attack. In 1485, 32 years after their capture of Constantinople, the Ottoman Turks made their first recorded raid on Malta and the Islands entered a new phase of their history. In 1524, the Order of the Hospitallers of St. John of Jerusalem sent a

1: Bowen-Jones et al. K-5 (1955-1958) 1961
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174 Commission to report on the state of the Islands. This report is no longer extant, but we may with caution use later writers' conflations (12) as evidence of the character of Maltese life in the period immediately before the coming of the Knights. Briefly, we can summarise as follows: Malta was described as 'a mere rock' inadequately covered with soil. The main products were honey, cotton and cumin, which the inhabitants exchanged for corn. Of water and timber there was a perpetual scarcity. Città Notabile was largely uninhabited and there were no settlements to be found on either the inhospitable northern littoral or the open bays and spacious harbours of the east. The island, with its 12,000 inhabitants, was frequently raided by corsairs who further increased the misery of the unfortunates subsisting on the barren soil. Gozo was described as being more fertile, with a population of some 5,000. The smaller island had no port and even the fine natural harbours of Malta were inadequately fortified. Much of Birgu (later Vittoriosa) lay in ruins. Even allowing for some prejudice on the part of the Knights' reconnaissance party it remains a forbidding picture.

The character of the pre-sixteenth century buildings is one manifest expression of the indigenous life which had developed (13). Churches were either of troglodytic form as at Mdina and Mellieha, or small, rectangular buildings with pitched roofs of a type still surviving today. Some old village houses or farmsteads still retain their ancient characteristics. In most cases, large double doors open on to inner courtyards on which in turn open all the windows and doors of the single-storeyed house and storerooms. Life was centred in the courts and turned its back on the rest of the world in blind defensive walls. In villages such as Żejtun, the old streets are narrow and tortuous and some old houses have but small, single doors. The town houses of the nobility and gentry became more architecturally developed during the fifteenth century and later, but only in the security offered by the citadels and larger 'casals'. The exuberance of building which followed the coming of the Knights might be figuratively taken to represent a great freeing of the Islands from insecurity in isolation. Henceforth Malta might be besieged but at least it would be as a bastion, not as a lonely fort.

How much of the traditional experience of Maltese early history has survived into recent times must be largely a matter for speculation. All we may say here is that, for over 3,000 years, all the forces and currents which make up Mediterranean history have at least impinged on Malta. Each has left something in the landscape and, it is tempting to believe, in the traditional experience of the people.

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
EZ6 Malta EZ6

communities where they became leaders, and the source of many new ideas and customs. In Ghaxaq, for example, I found that a teacher born in Valletta had been the one to introduce the custom of decorating the streets for the festa.

It is, of course extremely difficult, if not impossible, to discover the motives which prompted people to choose a particular partit. The only possible clue to at least one set of reasons may well lie in the correlation between occupational class and partit affiliation. Apart from this class alignment, I found no evidence in Farrug, or any other village so divided, of any pre-existing structural division out of which these festa partiti might have developed. In view of the way membership is inherited, it would appear that the position which members of the great-grandfather generation occupied in the village class structure in some way influenced their choice of partit. There is some evidence for this, although not a great deal, to be found in the genealogies of the present generation. Frequent marriages with outsiders, emigration and the changing employment structure of the country over the past six decades have blurred this picture considerably.

But it is certainly possible that the new cult appealed more to those persons who held no office in the older confraternities and who performed no official functions in connection with the celebration of the annual festa of the village patron. Through the new cult they could gain offices and perform functions which hitherto had been monopolized by the circle of the village elite who surrounded the parish priest. Some informants have also mentioned that young men were particularly attracted to the new cult. In this we can see the universal resistance of the young to the authority of their elders, for by becoming active in the new cult, they were asserting their independence from the controls of the older generation. Were the secondary partiti then a form of protest against the established authority, a sort of underdogs' party?

Other facts appear to support the hypothesis that the foundation of the secondary partiti was in some way related to a wider working-class movement. Many of the partiti are dedicated to St. Joseph, the patron saint of the working classes who were beginning to organize themselves into formal associations throughout Europe. In Malta there are many signs that this devotion was very strong. In addition to the many new confraternities dedicated to

3: Buxton D-5 (1920-1921) 1922 EZ6 Malta EZ6

175 169 361 The building of Valletta was begun by La Vallette and continued by subsequent Grand Masters. The majority of the labourers employed appear to have been slaves, although a certain number of men are said to have been imported from Sicily and Calabria. It is difficult to estimate how far an industrial population, which must have amounted to over 8000 men, can have affected the ethnology of the island.

175 161 361 It will be seen, then, that the population of the urban districts, including as it does such a very large proportion of the total inhabitants of the island, is comparatively new to its present surroundings. We have not got in Valletta, as we have in some parts of the Mediterranean, a town site which has been occupied more or less continuously since the dawn of history. We do not know, of course, what was the condition of Mount Sceberras before Valletta was built, but it certainly was not in any way an urban area, the old town having been what is now known as Citta Vecchia.

175 648 The subsequent history of the Order is not of great importance from the ethnological point of view. The Knights did not succeed in suppressing the Barbary corsairs, but carried on a number of sea-faring expeditions, especially in the Levant, although during the seventeenth century there were numerous sea battles between the Knights and the corsairs.

175 433 464 During the occupation of the Order, the food supply of Malta was imported from Sicily, and when diplomatic relations were strained between the Order and the King of Spain, shortage of food often became very marked. The relations between the Maltese and the Knights are difficult to sum up briefly. During the earlier days the privileges of the natives were only limited as far as military necessity, and, to a certain extent, financial obligations demanded. In later days the Maltese were employed as labourers, as soldiers, and as sailors, and although we find that in many cases the Grand Masters behaved generously to native women and children, the general record of the Knights, especially in the years before the final crash came, were unworthy of the ideals of an ascetic Order.

175 648 The Order ruled the island until the final break-up of the last relics of Mediæval Europe by Napoleon. The French garrison surrendered to the British in 1800, after holding the island for two years. Malta was formally ceded to the British crown in 1814.

IV.—Demography.

161 174 It has been suggested that the large number of bones found in the Hypogæum is evidence of a large population in Neolithic times. The place is, however, probably an ossuary, and may have been in use over a long period. The earlier records are for the most part unreliable. In 870, 3000 Greeks are said to have been killed, and 3614 women and 5000 children sold into captivity. This suggests a large population. In 1530 Boisgelin's figure (23) is 15,000, but Miège (27) suggests a population of 29,659. After the attack of the Turks in 1566, the total is said to have dropped to 10,000. The emissary of Pope Gregory XIII reported the

3: Buxton D-5 (1920-1921) 1922 EZ6 Malta EZ6

population as 20,000 in 1582. In 1632, 50,113 is given, and in 1667, 53,000. In 1741, 110,000 is the population, which is said to have increased to 114,000 in 1798. The figures for Malta and Gozo in 1826 are stated to be 119,736. But the first reliable figure is 115,945 in 1828. In 1881 the population was 132,129 in Malta and 17,653 in Gozo; in 1901, 184,742, and 1911, 211,564.

In regard to the proportion of the sexes there were in 1911 110 bachelors to 100 spinsters, 98 husbands to 100 wives, and 44 widowers to 100 widows. In round thousands, the males over 5 years of age were engaged in the following occupations: 7 in professional, 2 domestic, 19 commercial, 12 agricultural, 21 industrial, and 31 were unproductive and unoccupied; the last figure is rather misleading as it includes at least four separate classes—children, aged, people of independent income, and incapables of all classes. The data in regard to foreigners is the most interesting for our purpose, as it gives an insight into the amount of mixture that is taking place. There were at the last census (1911) (31) 854 ♂ and 1,003 ♀ foreigners in the island. Of these 3 ♀ were English, the remainder were made up as follows: 77 ♂ and 45 ♀ from Africa (apart from 1 ♂ and 2 ♀, all these came from Egypt, Tripoli, Tunis and Algeria); 479 ♂ and 499 ♀ from Sicily; 156 ♂ and 253 ♀ from other parts of Italy; 36 ♂ and 39 ♀ came from Greece, and 11 ♂ were classified as Asiatics. This does not, of course, include the garrison, a large floating population of which the figures are uncertain, as they depend so much on the ships which happen to be in harbour at the time when the census is taken. The increase of population between 1828 and 1911 is of interest. That of Malta increased by 88·25 per cent. of the total, and that of Gozo by 45·31 per cent. The increase in Malta was nearly five times as great in the suburban area as in the other areas combined.[1]

The density per square mile in 1911 was 1884 (Malta 2167, and Gozo 879). The density in the south-east corner of Malta is, however, greater than would appear from these figures. If the island be divided along a line west of Gargur, Naxaro, Musta, Notabile, Rabato, Crendi, the areas east and west of such a line would be almost equal in size. The eastern area, however, contained in 1911 183,132 inhabitants, and the western 5737. Practically all the Neolithic remains occur in the eastern area, suggesting that the centres of population have not changed appreciably since Neolithic times.

V.—Material and Methods.

The skelotal material examined is conveniently grouped in four series: (i) Bones from the Hypogæum at Hal Saflieni (Malta Local Neolithic); (ii) Miscellaneous ancient skeletons, chiefly Romano-Maltese; (iii) Specimens from the Chapel of Bones (Late Mediæval); (iv) Modern bones. Only in case (ii) were any complete skeletons available.

[1] Since this article was written the results of the Census of 1921 have become available. They are as follows:—Malta, 189,097 (92,127 ♂, 97,570 ♀); Gozo, 22,561 (10,618 ♂, 11,943 ♀). Total for the two islands, 212,358, an increase of only 994 since 1911, as against 26,822 in the previous decade.

3: Buxton D-5 (1920-1921) 1922 EZ6 Malta EZ6

The megalith builders, who may be conveniently termed "Malta first race" (culturally "Local Neolithic"), are certainly akin to the early, and, indeed, present inhabitants of North Africa and to those of Sicily, Corsica, Sardinia, and Spain, and belong to what is usually known as the Mediterranean race, differing from many skulls of this type in having a shorter nasal aperture, and therefore a bigger nasal index.

The inhabitants of the Barbary coast have been discussed at great length by Bertholon and Chantre (41). A series of 124 skulls (unfortunately the sexes have been mixed) from Carthage, dating from the sixth to the third century, B.C., shows a close resemblance to the "Neolithic" skulls found in the Hypogæum at Hal Saflieni. The low standard deviations, even when the sexes are mixed, *e.g.* cephalic index, mean 74·73 and 2·94 σ[1] suggest the absence of any Armenoid blood in Carthage, and a small series (35) of modern crania ($\delta + \varphi$) from Tunis show almost identical figures (*e.g.* cephalic index mean 74·31 and 2·96σ).

In Sicily from Eneolithic times onward the population is of the same type. Even in a series of two hundred modern Sicilian skulls, Giuffrida Ruggeri found only 5 δ and 2 φ of the Eurasiatic form, one was doubtful. Apart from the small series from Anghelu Reju, the modern inhabitants of Sardinia and Corsica appear to belong to this type (46).

It is remarkable that wherever we find Mediterranean man he shows little variation, suggesting a primitive stock which has maintained itself in certain areas.

The "Neolithic" Maltese (Malta first race) can have differed but little from our own Neolithic ancestors, except in the form of the nasal aperture. The modern people differ from the modern British type in head form, in stature, and in the general build of the skeleton. It would seem as though these differences were of essential importance. The Maltese appear to be a mixture of a people who certainly form a part of the population of the British Isles, but there is a second element that is not akin. It is noticeable that, as would appear from recent work, the Neolithic element seems not to have been entirely swamped in the British Isles; on the other hand we have shown that in spite of continuous influx of Mediterranean blood, it has not been able to dominate the population in Malta. Possibly the geographical conditions of the island are particularly favourable to the continuance of the race which has since developed.

These megalith builders are succeeded by a different type of folk, exhibiting Armenoid characteristics (Malta second race). The most interesting question of Maltese anthropology is, where did these late arrivals come from, and when did they come to Malta. Early skulls are unfortunately missing at present in the Mediterranean area. The immigrants are not racially allied to the people of Italy, Sicily, or the Barbary coast; they differ fundamentally from what appears to be the type

[1] σ is used throughout this paper as a symbol for "standard deviation."

3: Buxton D-5 (1920-1921) 1922 EZ6 Malta EZ6

144 174 in Albania ; they resemble some of the elements in the early population of Cyprus, but the closest parallel appears to be Crete, some parts of Greece, and the Islands of the Sea. Such evidence as we have suggests an immigration from the eastern part of the Mediterranean. We have already argued elsewhere (38, p. 92) that even early in the Bronze Age there existed in the Eastern Mediterranean a mixed stock consisting of elements of Armenoid and Mediterranean man, and suggested that such mixing possibly took place as early as the end of the Neolithic period. It seems possible that these people arrived in Malta at a much later date. Unfortunately the gap is a long one. Plenty of Neolithic material has survived, we have a few scattered finds in the long intervening periods, and a small and scarcely adequate number of crania of the Romano-Maltese time.

We have argued above that the Malta second race cannot have come from anywhere but the Eastern Mediterranean, and that they show no affinities with the Carthaginians. We have at present, however, no satisfactory cranial evidence from Carthage earlier than the sixth century B.C. We know, on the other hand, that Carthage was closely connected in earlier times with the great trading cities of the Syrian coast. The conditions in Malta and North Africa are extremely different, and whereas it might be impossible for people of Armenoid type to establish themselves on the coast of North Africa, this argument would not affect the possible establishment of the same type in a comparatively isolated island. We know, further, that a people of undoubtedly Syrian origin, namely the Jews, have, in Tripoli, to a large extent, lost their typical head form, while retaining their religious, social, and, it would appear, at least some of their physical characteristics. It is possible, therefore, that the origin of the Malta second race must be looked for in Phœnician traders of Armenoid origin, who may have come either directly from the Eastern Mediterranean or indirectly via Carthage.

There can be little doubt that such a change must have taken place at a comparatively late date in the history of Malta, but it would seem extraordinary that an invasion of any such race could have entirely altered the population of an island. We have at present no evidence to show how the change was affected. It may have extended over some generations, but in that case we should have expected to find an intermediate stage between Malta first and second races. Our present evidence, however, does not, unfortunately, cover that transitional period. It is possible that such a period may be discovered. On the other hand we have the possibility of the new influx of people exterminating, or nearly exterminating, the previous inhabitants, an event which is not without parallel in modern times. In North Africa the problem is somewhat different. Here the Armenoid peoples can only have represented a comparatively small element in the whole population, and we know that there are certain brachycephalic elements surviving till to-day. Again, the inhumation burials in Carthage which have as yet been explored are so few, and show so little variation in cranial form, that they may quite well belong to

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some definite section of the population. On the one hand we have on the mainland a series of settlers among a large indigenous population, and on the other hand we have a further band of settlers, on a small island, on which it is quite possible events occurred which would have been impossible amidst a large population.

We have not at present sufficient statistical material in early times to enable us to judge how far there has been a change in the standard deviations since the coming of the second race, which would enable us to say whether there ever was a time in Malta when a considerable mixing of races was taking place; and it must always be remembered that the second race may have been, at least in origin, considerably intermixed with Mediterranean blood before they ever ventured as far as Malta.

It cannot be denied that the second race has altered since its arrival in Malta; but just as in most parts of the Mediterranean, even at comparatively short distances apart, we find local divergences, it would hardly be surprising that we should also find differences in the time series, namely, that people of one age should show a slight physical difference from those of the other. The internal differences, however, in Malta appear to be but insignificant when compared with the differences between the Maltese and the other inhabitants of the Mediterranean, and it seems justifiable —at least for purposes of intensive study—to regard them as a Maltese sub-race.

Summing up their characters, they are distinctly long-headed, though hardly so long-headed as the Cretans, but nearly 10 mm. longer than the Cypriots; they are broad-headed, having about the same head breadth as the Cretans, and a greater breadth than the Cypriots. The change since ancient times has operated both in shortening the length and increasing the breadth, the height of the cranium having remained constant. The face is much broader than in ancient times; the orbits are higher and narrower; the nose longer and broader, so that the nasal index is not appreciably altered.

The Mediæval skulls in the Chapel of Bones presented characteristics similar to those of the skulls in the modern ossuaries. Although some variation occurred, as might be expected in a series which might contain a number of foreigners, the standard deviations are sufficiently small to suggest that on the whole the skulls are those of adult males of a normal population. The standard deviations are, indeed, smaller than those of the series from the modern ossuary. Both series, from the Mediæval Chapel of Bones, and from the modern ossuary, are large in size—that is to say, absolutely long, high, and broad; in the majority, the brow ridges are very well developed, and there are other indications of considerable muscularity. It is possible that some of the skulls, on the sex of which it was not possible to express an opinion, may be males of Mediterranean origin, as these latter appear as a general rule to be smaller. A few appeared to be Negroid.

Although skulls which presented Negroid characters were not uncommon from Saracenic—possibly earlier, and certainly later—graves, the Negro element in the

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The stay of the French in the island was too short to have any effect on the population. A social barrier has been built up between the British and the people of the land, and the general impression gained is that, though there are a certain number of mixed marriages, there cannot, even after three generations of a large, if floating, British element in Valletta, be more than a very thin British strain in the population.

We have shown, in dealing with the history of the island, how extremely difficult it is to account for the wholesale immigration of an Armenoid-like population at any period. We have also shown how, in spite of the continual immigration of people of the Mediterranean stock, the Maltese type (*i.e.* Malta second race, displaying Armenoid characters) appears to have persisted for a long period. It would seem, therefore, a point worthy of further consideration, whether the development of the Maltese along the lines they appear to have followed may not be due to certain definite geographical factors of whose influence we are as yet unaware. It is possible that if we had at our disposal a long unbroken series, instead of larger or smaller series from Neolithic, Mediæval, and modern ossuaries, we should not find such striking contrasts as we do at present. Anthropological data from various parts of the Mediterranean show that there is very often a significant difference between two villages in different valleys of the same mountain range. It is possible that even the few generations which have elapsed between the building of Hal Tarxien and 1921 may be the equivalent, in time, of such a journey in space, and certain big changes may have taken place owing to changing geographical conditions. There can be little doubt that the climate of Malta has changed very much, not only since the first terrace was cut in the Weid Dalam, but even since the formation of the second terrace. We have also suggested that the evidence from Professor Zammit's excavations at Hal Tarxien hints at a change in climate since Neolithic times. The change in the structure of the population may be due, therefore, partly to geographical as well as to historical causes.

Whether or no the development of the Maltese sub-race is due to particular geographical conditions, there can be little doubt that, in Malta at least, the strain is biologically remarkably successful and extremely fertile. In spite of the high infant mortality which has existed in the past, they have continued to increase, and the modern developments of hygiene and the care of infants are likely to make the increase still more rapid. If the overcrowding continues, in a comparatively short time we shall be faced with conditions in the island which would appear to be, biologically speaking, unsatisfactory. Sanitary conditions can be improved, food can be imported, but excessive overcrowding may bring its own remedy, either in disease or in a diminished fertility. The present fertility is quite possibly due to some underlying climatic condition. In spite of lack of water, Malta has long been extremely fertile botanically, and was famed for this in classical times. The Maltese goats, by far the most abundant large mammal of the island apart from

3: Buxton D-5 (1920-1921) 1922 EZ6 Malta EZ6

man, are also unusually fertile, and the females possess remarkably developed udders. Possibly similar causes make both man and the goats fertile. If this is so, emigrants from the island will probably, after a short time, lose their fertility,[1] whilst the only limiting factors on the island itself will be space and the food and water supply.

Summarizing our general conclusions, the race in Malta which is associated with the period of great megalithic buildings—a cultural stage we have termed "Malta Local Neolithic"—appears to be closely akin to the Mediterranean race. This is our "Malta first race." At a later date, possibly towards the end of the Bronze Age, but more probably during the Early Iron Age, Malta was peopled by a race with different characteristics, our "Malta second race." These people are of Armenoid type, but probably have an admixture of Mediterranean blood. Their origin appears to be the Eastern Mediterranean. They may have come to Malta either directly or by way of Carthage. They may have destroyed the previous inhabitants, or they may merely have pursued methods of peaceful penetration. This race has firmly established itself in Malta, and all subsequent introduction of foreign blood has failed to raise the variation. During the course of years certain changes have taken place; there are also certain local variations, but the differences between Malta and Gozo are not greater than the differences between the general population of Malta and at least one, and possibly more, of the more isolated villages.

APPENDIX I.

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[1] Of interest in this connection is the fact that there is at present a Maltese colony in Detroit, U.S.A., and it will be instructive to observe whether, amid alien surroundings, the strain is able to perpetuate itself and to retain its fertility.

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541 173 177 to the ancient Saturnalia (*) and was condemned by the Synod of Trullus, where it was decreed that the days called the Calends should entirely be stripped of their ceremonies, and that the faithful should no longer observe them; that the public dancing of women should cease as being the occasion of much harm and ruin, and as being invented and observed in honour of the Gods of the heathens and therefore quite averse to the Christian life.

541 174 177 The author of "Convivial Antiquities" speaking about the ancient Saturnalia, says: that on this occasion there were

(*) Saturnalia, festivals in honour of *Saturno*, celebrated in Rome about the middle of December. The celebration, which continued for 3 or more days, was remarkable for the liberty which universally prevailed. The slaves were permitted to ridicule their masters and to speak with freedom upon every subject.

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frequent and luxurious feastings amongst friends, and changes of dress made, and the Christians have adopted the same customs. 541 174 [177]

He added, that as the heathens had their Saturnalia in December, Lupercalia and Baccanalia (*) in February, so amongst Christians three months are

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(*) Lupercalia, a yearly festival observed at Rome on the 15th of February in honour of *Pan* the God of Shepherds. It was usual to sacrifice two goats and a dog. The skins of the victims were cut into throngs, with which whips were made for the youths. With these whips the youths ran about the streets, almost naked, and whipped freely all those whom they met.

Baccanalia, festivals in honour of *Bacchus* (God of vintage, and of wine drinkers) at Rome—during the time of the celebration, the Romans clothed themselves in fawns' skins, fine linen and mitres; they carried "thyrsi" drums, pipes and flutes and crowned themselves with garlands of ivy, vine, fir &c. In this manner both sexes joined in the solemnity and ran about the streets nodding their heads dancing in ridiculous postures, and filling the air with hideous shrieks and shouts.

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541 spent in feastings and revelling of every
•174 kind.

FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT

796 In the afternoon of this day, which
783 is known by the name of "Hadd in-nies" (the people's Sunday), immense crowds of people, from all parts of the Island, flock to casal Zabbar, in their best Sunday finery, for the purpose of saying some prayers before our Lady of Graces (tal Grazia) in the pari-h Church of the village, as an atonement of the follies committed on the Carnival days, After paying the visit the people go out of the church parading the streets.

796 The numerous shops of the said vil-
265 lage are pretty well got up for this occasion. Stews, ham, cheesecakes, and other viands are profusely supplied for

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Maltese children look forward with great anxiety to get either from their parents, or from some friend or relative, a *figolla* at Easter. 796 262 431

The *figolla* consists of a bit of flat baked dough, cut in the shape of a woman, a turk, an eagle, a horse, a star, or a basket, with one or more eggs, having the shell stained red, or some other colour, embedded in its centre and fixed in position by cross bands of paste.

This characteristic rite of Paschal or Easter eggs is most widely diffused. 796 262

The universal connection of eggs with Eastertide does not seem to rest on any Christian symbolism. This popular observance is clearly of pagan origin. 171 174

In pagan imagery the egg was assigned to *Astarte*—the Phœnician Venus—as an emblem of the fructifying

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796 262 171 •174

forces of nature, and may thus have come to be associated with April, the month held sacred to *Aphroditis* (*), in or near which Easter falls.

We are told that the Jews used eggs in the feast of the Passover, and that when the Persians keep the festival of the Solar New Year (in March) they mutually present each other with coloured eggs. There can be little doubt, however, that the use of eggs at this season was originally symbolical of the revivification of nature, that is, the springing forth of life in spring.

A writer, in the "Gentlemen's Magazine" for July 1783, supposes the Easter egg to be an emblem of the Resurrection of our Lord—in the same manner, as the chicken entombed, as

(*) The Grecian name of Venus

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it were, in the egg, in due time bursts its shell and springs forth to life. 796 262 174 171

Hutchinson (History of Northumberland) says: Eggs were held by the Egyptians as a sacred emblem of the renovation of mankind after the deluge.

The Jews adopted it to suit the circumstances of their History as a type of their departure from the land of Egypt, and it was used in the feast of Passover as a part of the furniture of the table with the Paschal Lamb.

The Christians have certainly used it on this day, containing as it does the elements of future life, as an emblem of the Resurrection. It seems that these eggs were decorated for a religious trophy after the days of lent, which are days of mortification and abstinence.

We know also that the Jews in ce-

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796 lebrating their Passover, placed on the
262 table two unleavened cakes called "pass-
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174 over cakes" (*) with hard boiled eggs bound in with slips of paste cross ways on them (†)

Hyde, in his "Oriental Sports" says that the Christians buy eggs at Easter and stain them with a red colour, in memory of the blood of Christ shed for us at the time of the Crucifixion.

That the Roman Catholic Church has considered eggs as emblematical of the Resurrection may be gathered from the Ritual.

St. GREGORY'S DAY
General procession

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793 This very popular feast, which takes place on the first Wednesday after

(*) The *figolla*.
(†) Brand's "Popular Antiquities."

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Grace's carriage to the commonest donkey cart, keep moving through the merry crowds, in search of their occupants. 796 [493]

Most of the people, however, who take part in this general procession, either stop at Zeitun, or proceed to Marsascirocco — a watering place at some distance from that village—where they spend the remainder of the day in merry making.

Round cheese cakes, *kassatât*, is the most common edible connected with this day, and from early morning, the whole day long, the shrill cries uttered by the innumerable vendors of the cakes may be heard throughout the village. 796 262 265

A few remarks about the origin of this procession will be interesting. 796 174.

Many and various are the opinions as regards that origin.

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796 Abela, in his "History of Malta"
•174 says: that it was instituted as a vow to
[731] St. Gregory, to whose intercession the Maltese had recourse in 1519, when the Island was visited by an epidemic disease.

Ciantar, the celebrated Historian, assures us, however, that the procession was instituted in 1400 long before the epidemic mentioned by Abela.

[648] Others again say: that it was held about the year 1429 whilst the Island was being besieged by some 18000 Moors, but this could not possibly be the case in as much as the people who were besieged within the walls of the town could not join in the cry "Misericordia" at Zeitun.

[731] Again some say that the procession took place for the first time in Malta in thanksgiving to the Almighty after

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the deliverance from a large swarm of locusts that once caused a dreadful havoc in the Island. 796 174 [931]

Monsignor Duzina, the Apostolic Visitor, who visited Malta in February 1575, having found that the origin of this procession was involved in great obscurity, caused the most aged men of the Island to be brought before him, and on asking them about the origin of the institution of this general procession, he was informed that the tradition was "That the procession was founded by a general vow of the Maltese after their deliverance from the Turks, whose fleet was dispersed by a terrible storm at Marsascirocco,(*) just when the Moslems were on the point 796 174 782 648

(*) This is probably the reason that the general procession goes to the churches of St. Catherine and St. Gregory, those being the nearest churches to Marsascirocco.

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796 of effecting a landing on the shores of
•174 the Island.
[648]
[782] It is an undeniable fact that the procession has been instituted in commemoration of some signal public deliverance. Of all the traditions, however, the most generally received is that which we read in the acts of the said Mons. Duzina's visit in 1575.

796 • This procession used formerly to take place in lent, on St. Gregory's day, which falls on the 12th of March. That day was selected not because the above mentioned invasion occurred on that particular day, but because lent being the time of penance, our faithful forefathers thought that the vow would be more acceptable to God in lent. And the day of St. Gregory was chosen, that Saint being the founder of all processions which are solemnized by the Roman Catholic Church.

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527 of April) which amounts to "April
522 fool" is applied with laughter.

527 The custom of sending one upon a
522 bootless errand on the 1st. of April is
174 perhaps a travesty of the sending hither and thither of our Lord from Annas to Caiphas, and from Pilate to Herod. It is possible, however, that it may be a relic of some old heathen festival.

It is conjectured that April day is celebrated as part of the festivity of the New Year. That day used to be kept on the 25th of March, and it is certain that the commencement of the New Year, at whatever time that was supposed to be, was always esteemed a high festival, and this was the case both amidst the ancient Romans and with us. Now great festivals were usually attended with an octave—that

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is, they were wont to continue for 8 days, whereof the first and last were the principal; and you will find the 1st. of April the octave of the 25th of March, and the close or ending consequently of the feast. Hence it is supposed that the 1st. day of April became a day of extraordinary mirth and festivity, especially among the lower classes who are apt to pervert and make a bad use of institutions, which at first might have been very laudable in themselves.

A writer in "Poor Robin's Almanac" for 1760, gives the following metrical description of the modern fooleries on the 1st. of April, with the open avowal of being ignorant of their origin.

"The 1st. of April some do say
Is set apart for all Fools' day,
But why the people call it so

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796 These fires are sometimes kept up
372 for hours, being continually fed by the scores of by-standers who take great delight in throwing amidst the flames some old rickety piece of furniture which they consider as lumber in their houses. Lots of happy and reckless children, and very often men, are seen merrily leaping in succession over and through the crackling flames (*).

796 At the time of the Order of St.
372 John of Jerusalem, the Grand Master
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[194] (*) Leaping over the fires is mentioned among the superstitious rites used at the *Palilia* feasts, instituted in honour of *Pales* the goddess of shepherds, (in the calends of May) in Ovidius's Fasti.

" Moxque per ardentes stipulae crepitantis acervos
Traijcias celeri strenua membra pede "

The learned Moresin appears to have been of opinion that the custom of leaping over these fires is a vestige of the ordeal, where to be able to pass through fires with safety, was held to be an indication of innocence.

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himself, soon after the *Angelus* used to leave his palace, accompanied by the Grand Prior, the Bishop, and two bailiffs, to set fire to some pitch barrels which were placed for the occasion in the square facing the sacred Hospital. 796 372 175

Great crowds used to assemble here in order to assist at this ceremony. The setting ablaze of the five casks, and later on, of the 8 casks, (*), by the Grand Master, was a signal for the others to kindle their fires in the different parts of the town.

Various opinions are entertained by antiquarian writers with regard to the origin of these fires on St. John's eve. 796 372 171 174

From the account given by Jakob Grimm in his "Deutsche Mythologie" p. p. 583, 593, it would appear that

(*) Eight being the languages of the Order.

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the great blaze reserved for the eve of the feast of the nativity of St. John the Baptist on the 23rd. of June, is observed with similar rites in every country of Europe.

The kindling of the fire, the leaping over or through the flames clearly show that these rites are essentially of heathen origin. They are obviously connected with the worship of the sun, and were doubtless practised long before the Baptist was born. In old heathen times the summer and winter solstices were the two greatest and most widespread festivals in Europe.

These fires—says another writer—are evidently a remnant of the ancient Beal fires of the Druids, at the *Beil* time, which was at the beginning of May. But why do they chiefly occur on the night before the festival of the

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Saint, instead of the old period of *Beil* time which was the beginning of May? —I do not believe that a satisfactory explanation of these circumstances has yet been given by any of the antiquaries. It was perhaps to transfer the practice or custom of lighting these fires from a Pagan to a Christian object.

The Nativity of St. John the Baptist was a great and solemn festival of the Church, like those of the other great festivals of Martyrs, the eve or vigil of it was, in the early ages, commemorated with appropriated ceremonies. The public devotions were kept up all night in the churches, of which the Saint was the patron, and the solemnities of the next day were ushered in amongst types and figures appropriate to the occasion. Amongst these was probably introduced a large and

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unusual exhibition of lights to typify the Baptist who, in the Gospel, is called by the Saviour himself "A burning shining Light." What could have been more natural than that the early Christian Authorities would have directed the people to light their anniversary fires on the eve of this Saint, and thus give to the national custom a Christian instead of a Pagan significance? To this feeling, most likely is due the transfer of the fires to the 23rd. of June and, perhaps too, this perpetuation to this day amongst the people.

Gebelin, in his "Allegories Orientales" accounts in the following manner for the custom of making fires on Midsummer Eve.

"Can one" says he "omit to mention here the St. John's fires, those sacred fires kindled about midnight, on the

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very moment of the solstices, by the greatest part of ancient as well as of modern nations—a religious ceremony of the most remote antiquity which was observed for the prosperity of states and people and to dispel every kind of evil? The origin of this fire which is still retained by so many nations, though enveloped in the mist of antiquity, is very simple. It was a *Feu de joie*, kindled the very moment the year began; for the first of all years, and the most ancient that we know of, began at this month of June, hence the very name of this month, *Junior* meaning the youngest, which is renewed; while that of the preceding one is May, *Major*, meaning the ancient. Thus the one was the month of young people whilst the other belonged to old men.

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These *feu de joie* were accompanied, at the same time, with vows and sacrifices for the prosperity of the people and the fruits of the earth.

They danced also round this fire, and the most active leaped over it. Each on departing took a fire brand, and the remains were scattered to the wind, which at the same time that it dispersed the ashes, was thought to expel every evil. When after a long train of years, the year ceased to commence at this solstice, the custom of making these fires, at this time, was still continued by force of habit. Besides it would have been a sad thing to have deprived the people of a day of joy in times when there were not many of them, thus the custom has been continued and handed down to us."

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Dr. Milner is of opinion that the fires lighted up all over the continent, on the eve of the 24th. of June, are not intended as the idolatrous worship of the sun or *Baal*, the Philistine God of fire, but in honour of Christ's precursor, as alluding to his character of bearing witness to the light (John i. 7) and of his being himself a bright and shining light (John V, 35).

In conclusion, it would appear as certain, that the fires of St. John's eve were intended to typify the Saint by an exhibition of light.

Formerly the feast of St. John (24th. of June) was very popular in Malta. It ranked with that of SS. Peter and Paul, celebrated at Notabile on the 29th of the same month.

The number of people that flocked to Valletta from all parts of the Island,

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527 No reason can be assigned for the
174 origin or meaning of keeping St. Mar-
tin's feast as a day of merriment among
[171] the Maltese. The usage is persisted
in without any association or tradition
to account for it, but the merry mak-
ing in the neighbouring island of
Sicily at this time of the year, when
the new wine is made use of for the
first time.

527 Wine drinkers are of opinion that
262 one can judge best of the flavour of
273 wine after eating some nuts first—
this perhaps is the reason why nuts are
made so much use of on this merry
day.

174 Moresin refers the great doings on
527 this occasion to an ancient Athenian
festival observed in honour of Bacchus,
on the 11th, 12th, and 13th days
of the month of *Anthesterion*, corres-
ponding with our November.

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directed upwards, and having a mouth piece by which the skin is filled, and a cane flute or pipe which is played with both hands. This the country people play at this time of the year to represent the shepherds of Bethlehem. 796 534 [237]

The decking out of the *presepiu*, a crib or representation of the Nativity of the Holy Child at Bethlehem, by a group of dolls with pasteboard scenery, furnishes amusement to the Maltese, both old and young. 796 778

Several of the houses have a crib more or less artistically arranged, and the better the arrangements of the crib, the greater is the concourse of people who come to see it.

The custom of decking our churches and habitations with evergreens at Christmas has existed from the very establishment of Christianity and was 796 174 824

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796 unquestionably derived from the like
174 practice of our Pagan ancestors.
824

"Trimming of Temples," says Polydore Virgil "with hangings, flowers, boughs, and garlands was taken from the heathen people, who decked their idols and houses with such array.

796 "Christmas," says Blount, "was
174 called the feast of lights in the Western
373 or Latin Church, from the many lights or candles that were lit at the feast, and this because Christ, the light of all lights, that true light, then came into the world. Hence the prevalent custom to have so many lights in our churches at Christmas midnight service.

796 The custom of eating pancakes or
174 fritters and honey cakes at Christmas
262 in Malta is supposed to owe its origin to the cakes baked in honour of *Janus*, who presided over the beginning of the New Year.

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MAY DAY

175 529 824 Historians mention that there was a time in Malta, during the Government of the Knights of St. John, when it was customary on the 1st of May to deck the Grand Master's palace balcony, and the doors of those who were invested with the Grand Cross, with branches of trees. [174] It appears that this sign of a holiday, which was introduced in Malta by the families from the island of Rhodes, was a remnant of the worship of the sun, formerly adored by the Rhodians.

171 529 824 Bourne cites Polydor Virgil, as telling us that among the Italians the youth of both sexes were accustomed to go into the fields in the Calends of May, and bring thence branches of trees, singing all the way as they came, and to place them on the doors of their

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these transformed creatures return home towards dawn quite exhausted and awake in the morning quite unconscious of their nocturnal expedition."[1] The derivation of the word *Gaugau* has been given as the Syrian *Hagogo*, a ghost; but surely the *Gaugau* is more than a simple ghost. His behaviour stamps him as a vampire. Busuttil says that "the yearly punishment" is thought to be inflicted because Christ "does not like anyone to be born at the same time he was born," and then suggests that the *Gaugau* came into Malta with the Phoenicians. The Phoenician origin and the popular explanation seem quite irreconcilable until it is recalled that—

> "It is well known that in the transition from paganry to Christianity the Christian clergy, finding it impossible to wean the populace from old customs or to eradicate primitive beliefs, discreetly met the situation by diverting pagan festivals to the honour of Christ. It is not so generally known that December 25th, the Christmas Day of Christendom, was necessarily thus fixed for the reason that this date was the birthday of Mithra, and that the obdurate heathen flatly refused to relinquish their cherished festival. It was not until A.D. 400 that the Church Fathers accepted the inevitable, and tactfully adopted the Birthday of Mithra as the official Birthday of Christianity. At the beginning of the fifth century, S. Chrysostom, referring to the festival of the pagan Sun god, wrote: 'On this day also the birthday of Christ *was lately fixed* at Rome in order that, while the heathens were busy with their profane ceremonies, the Christians might perform their sacred rites undisturbed. They call this (December 25th) the birthday of the Invincible One (Mithra); but who is so invincible as the Lord? They call

[1] BUSUTTIL, *Holiday Customs in Malta*.

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it the Birthday of the Solar Disc; but Christ is the Sun of Righteousness' " (S. HEATH, *Romance of Symbolism*).[1]

We cannot, by any stretch of the imagination, connect the vampire *Gaugau* with Christianity; but with Mithra the affair becomes quite different. It is not difficult to connect a child born on the eve of the Birth-feast of the bloodthirsty Mithra with something more terrible than "ghostly pranks." It is comforting to hear that the vampire *Gaugau* is now capable of nothing worse than "frightening people with his groanings!"

There was a time before the dread broom of "Progress" began to sweep all peasant customs—good as well as bad—before it, when the newly-delivered mother kept carefully to her house during forty days for fear of meeting another mother who had been confined on the same day. It was believed that of two such women meeting within forty days of their confinement, one would suffer a great misfortune. Two possible reasons for this quaint prohibition are apparent. It was either some remnant of a primitive, levitical period of purification or a means of ensuring that the mother wasted no time gossiping at the doorway or in the market place, to the neglect of her young family.

GROWING UP

With the child's first birthday comes the *'uccija*, or "choosing." A tray or basket is filled with an assortment of articles representing trades and professions—a book, a rosary, a candle, an inkstand, a sword—whichever the baby first picks up will indicate its bent in life. This simple means of divination is widespread, and little need be said of it except that some grains of corn are sometimes introduced as a symbol of generosity, suggesting that at one time the *'uccija* decided

[1] H. BAYLEY, *The Lost Languages of Symbolism*.

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There is a *Hares*, too, who guards all hidden treasure. 776
If you are a deserving person he will lead you to the treasure; but you must never, on pain of death by strangulation, tell anyone how you discovered it.

There are persistent tales in Malta of a priceless treasure, hidden by the builders of the prehistoric temples. This treasure is known as "The Golden Bull," and is guarded by a most terrible and powerful *Hares*. No one has ever found it because, though some few have been selected by the *Hares* to be led to its hiding place, they have been unable to keep his secret, and he has strangled them together with the friends in whom they have confided.

There seems little reason to doubt that the Golden Bull is [174] a legacy of the old gods—possibly of Mithra or Osiris—and that the great snake-like *Hares* who guards the treasure is no other than Set, guardian of the underworld. Perhaps the Bull exists, hidden deep in one of Malta's many caves.

There may be peasants who know where it is. Amongst the moor-folk of Devon and the peasants of Ireland there are many who know the whereabouts of the "crocks of gold," buried by the Pixies and the leprechauns; but none would dare disturb "Fairy Gold." So it is with the Maltese peasant. He would be a bold man who had dealings with the "Golden Bull."

From a very tender age the little Maltese will be occupied 538
in learning his Catechism and the significance of the rites and [795]
ceremonies of his faith. Though busied in this way there will be time, in the long winter evenings, for "Fairy Tales." Usually one member of the family will be able to read. If none [212]
can read someone will certainly know all the old tales and legends by heart, and will be expert in the correct way of recounting them. The family will gather round the story-teller and all, from grandmother to youngest grandchild, will listen with close attention to tales which many of them have heard hundreds of times.

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to justify the inconvenience of caring for them is a lesson which had to be learned. "Ghalec ma tridx tmut l'ghagiusa, ghax actar ma ticber izjed titghallem"—"The old woman does not want to die for the older she grows the more she learns"—is a common saying. For further proof that the story of the "Kaukam" has come down from very early times, there is the only other context in which the word *ghagiusa* means "an old woman" or, more accurately, "the oldest woman hereabouts" (normally the word means "a crab").

> "We have an old custom in Malta," says Bussutil,[1] "to make children believe that the ghagiusa is killed at noon on Thursday, the middle of Lent. Mothers, after fasting the first twenty days of Lent, send their children to the door of the parish church, or of some convent to see the sexton or some friar throwing the old woman from the steeple. . . ."

That the destruction of the old woman should occur in the middle of Lent—a period of fasting—is too much of a coincidence not to indicate that, in times when food was scarce, the aged folk were removed—either by being thrown from a high place or, to save the guilt of actual murder, walled up in a rock tomb, as in the case of the peasant. The association of the Church with the destruction of the *ghagiusa* suggests that in primitive times the removal of the aged was the responsibility of the pagan priests who performed the "ritual murders." These murders may have developed from a practical necessity into a sacrificial propitiation.

The story of the Kaukam takes its name from the ancient's first piece of advice to his perplexed son. Faced with the probability of losing his own crops while he cares for those of the Sultan, who has commanded that no man may plant his

[1] GALEA AND MURRAY, op. cit.

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539 own fields until he has planted an equal number for the Sultan, he is told, in rhyming verse:

> Buy the Kaukama and the Kaukam
> Count not the cost.
> Feed the field with clover and lucerne
> So the plough may bury them deep.
> At night till your fields, by day the Sultan's.
> Without the Kaukam and the two Kaukama
> Nought will remain but the strength of your hands.

539 There is no one now who can say what they were that
174 the peasant was to buy. The words have no longer any meaning. Can it be—for we have already seen that the story is of great antiquity—that the hero was the originator of draught oxen? Of the two words one would seem to be singular, the other plural. Perhaps the old man's advice to his son was to breed oxen for draught, known formerly only as food. The use of oxen for ploughing and threshing would have so lightened the peasant's labour as to make it possible for him to plant and tend the Sultan's fields as well as his own. That is what he succeeds in doing, with the aid of the mysterious "Kaukama and Kaukam," to the amazement and chagrin of the Sultan. "Without the Kaukam and the two Kaukama nought will remain but the strength of your hands" might reasonably read "Without the ox and the two she-oxen . . . ."

539 The Sultan is unwilling to be beaten by the peasant, and sets him more problems which place him repeatedly "within the onion" (Maltese for "the horns of a dilemma"). The old man, from his rock-tomb, furnishes the answer to every problem, and the peasant is at last forced to tell the Sultan his guilty secret.

> "The Sultan was highly delighted. . . . From this day forward no one shall bury either father or mother

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The officiating priest was then presented with a basin containing a cake, a handkerchief, and two bottles of wine—the usual fee on such occasions. When the marriage ceremony was completed, everyone returned from church in the same order as before. 585 [793] [465]

As the newly married couple wended their way to their house, the women and girls who crowded the balconies showered flowers upon them also nuts and grains and wheat, and on their entering the house one of the kinsfolk threw from one of the windows or balcony a few handfuls of barley and some small coins on their heads.

The nuptial feast took place immediately afterwards; but the bride ate in a separate apartment. The repast being ended, she was seated next to her husband and drank out of the same cup.

At a village wedding the company danced during the feast, each dancer throwing a piece of money to the fiddlers and each guest contributing a fowl to the repast. [535] [431] [465]

The bride always passed a week in her father's house, after which she was received with much pomp by her husband, whose relations gave a great feast which was called *il hargia*."[1] [591]

The bridegroom's symbolic present of a fish is very likely connected with fecundity, for the fish was regarded as an emblem of fecundity by the Assyrians and the Phoenicians. It is not, however, in this connection alone that the fish is a potent symbol. Prudence (apparently a virtue highly prized in a Maltese wife—Salt, another symbol of prudence, is included in the ingredients with which the bride's lips are anointed), and Wisdom were anciently supposed to be the properties of numerous Sacred Fish. Finn M'Cull, in the Irish legend, "Happens upon the Salmon of Knowledge . . ." 584 174 825 [577].

[1] BUSUTTIL, op. cit.

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174 584 825 which conferred on him "such Wisdom, Prowess, and good fortune . . . that Fame and Prosperity always attended him thereafter." Tennyson, describing his mystic Lady of the Lake, has:

> And o'er her breast floated the Sacred Fish.

The Saviour Himself was symbolized by the early Christians as a fish. Julius Africanus, an early Christian writer, said of Christ that He was the Great Fish, caught by the Hook of God, whose flesh nourishes the whole world.[1]

This bridal fish, then, may be in some sense a sacramental offering as well as a mere symbol.

584 789 828 The anointing of the bride's lips is yet another custom which, like the miniature "garden inclosed" of the marriageable girl, recalls the Canticle of Canticles:

> Thy lips my spouse are as a dropping honeycomb, honey and milk are under thy tongue. . . .[2]

585 174 The whole of this marriage ceremony is reminiscent of the old Fertility cults—the cakes, sweetmeats, nuts, grain, all in honour of the fertile Mother whose bountiful Earth is carried in a bowl bearing effigies of the bride and bridegroom whom it is hoped she will bless with her own fecundity and riches.

EVERYDAY HABITS

771 788 Grez, the housewife, will go about her daily tasks carefully following a thousand small rules, most of which have their English parallels. She will never cut a loaf without first making the Sign of the Cross on it with forefinger or knife. If the loaf falls to the ground, she will kiss it by way of asking pardon. She will not sweep her house after sunset for fear of [754] sweeping away good fortune. She will take care not to throw her "combings" out of doors. Should anyone wish her ill it

[1] *The Lost Language of Symbolism.* [2] *Song of Solomon*, IV, ii.

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explanations of them. Two kinds of explanations have to be treated with some caution, the local one and the Christian one . . . and we shall find ourselves going back for the true causes to the worship of the sun and of the seasons.

The revel, easily degenerating into the brawl, has always found opposition, as in the thunderous verse of an old poet who branded the Midsummer processions as

> Of Edinburgh the great idolatrie
> And manifest abomination.

Other forces have militated against them besides the disapproval of the austere. As another old writer has rather obscurely remarked: 'No suffimen is a greater fugator of phantosmes than gunpowder.' Other such fugators are periods of increased popular education and of quickened pace in national life. These forces have been active enough in our own times, and few Midsummer customs have survived them; but all of them were originally the spontaneous outcome of certain impulses in the make-up of human beings, and thus, past or present, they are of permanent interest to us."

There seems little doubt that the Night of Fires belongs to that very early civilization of which, as has been suggested elsewhere, the Maltese are amongst the direct descendants. What more appropriate than the adaptation of these ancient fires to the honour of that Saint beneath whose banner there happened all that is most valiant in Maltese history?

In one form or another practically all the "seasonal" customs familiar in other countries appear in Malta: All Fools' Day, with its affinity to the Hindu festival of Huli; May Day, when the children gather green bows in honour of Flora; New Year's Day, when lime is strewn on doorsteps in token of good luck; but Malta's most popular holiday is the period of Carnival. Its

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The fratelli
763 —lay brethren of the congregation—hurry from their homes
794 to take their places in the procession of the Viatecum. Marching rapidly, like a company of soldiers, headed by a peasant ringing a staccato, commanding bell, some bearing tapers, some censers, all chanting the prayers for the dying, they pass
[793] quickly through the village street. Under a canopy, borne by two sturdy *fratelli*, goes the priest in his bright vestments, bearing God to the dying man.

The women hurry to place a light in their windows, kneel and pray as God passes.

So, with such poor pomp as these simple folk can muster,
764 the Prince of Peace comes to dying Zeppu. The funeral rites
[171] and customs differ hardly at all nowadays from those of other Catholic countries. But Zeppu's grandfather could remember a time when the Old Things were much in evidence.

764 There were the "Wailing Women" (whose name *neuuieha*
767 survives in the sense of "one who constantly complains"). They wore long black robes, and chanted death-songs whose burden was a combination of praise for the deceased's virtues and rebuke for his having left them. They cut the vines from the courtyard, overturned the furniture, broke pottery, and mixed the fragments with soot and ashes, staining the doors
[302] of the bereaved house with the mixture. They cut pieces of their hair and scattered them over the coffin.

765 If the dead man possessed horses, cows, goats, all their tails
[262] had pieces cut from them in token of mourning. There was a
[764] form of "wake" where funeral cakes and boiled wheat were eaten. A carpet was spread over the tomb to prevent the unware from treading on it.

[372] No fire was lit in the house for three days after the funeral.
[302] The women kept to the house for forty days. The men, having remained indoors for seven days, went unshaven.

764 Here are clear signs of the most primitive funeral rites
174 and *taboos*. Death was a pollution—hence the segregation of

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the relatives and the staining of the doors. Provision was made for the deceased's comfort in the other life by the breaking of his pottery—thus releasing the *manes* to accompany him in death.

The wake was a death feast originally designed to provide a sort of communion with the departed. Similarly, the cutting of the mourner's hair was intended to furnish a ritual link with the dead. Primitive tribes express the same idea in cannibalism and in funeral mutilations.

The cutting of the animals' tails was very probably a version of the sacrifice in expiation of the dead man's sins.

> ". . . Then they brought out a splendid white horse, and the priest cut some hair from its mane and tail and burned it on the altar, shouting 'A sacrifice!' . . . 'I saw poor Weland's face through the smoke, and I couldn't help laughing . . .' says Puck."[1]

Based on fear, as these "ancient fictions" were, they yet hid certain eternal truths.

The Old Things, with their complicated rituals, their theologies of terror, served their turn in leading mankind some distance on his upward march. Nowhere is their vague disembodied presence more felt than in Malta's rapidly dwindling countryside, where every stone may well have housed one of their altars. Not all of the Old Things were evil. The good ones have been adopted by Mother Church; but there remain those restless, evil ones who have never bowed down to the Nazarene. They hide in the shadows, angry and resentful.

THE HOUR OF THE OLD THINGS

Let us go out, at the third or fourth hour after midnight. Away from the clamorous ballrooms of the cramped city of

[1] *Puck of Pook's Hill.*